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TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES ABOUND IN THE NEW YEAR

Whether your New Year's Resolutions include getting more organized, losing weight, stopping smoking or becoming more financially secure -- chances are there is a class being planned for you by KYTC's training administration branch. The 11 employees in that branch, which is in the Office of Personnel Management, work year-round to anticipate needs of transportation employees and plan courses to help them improve their skills.

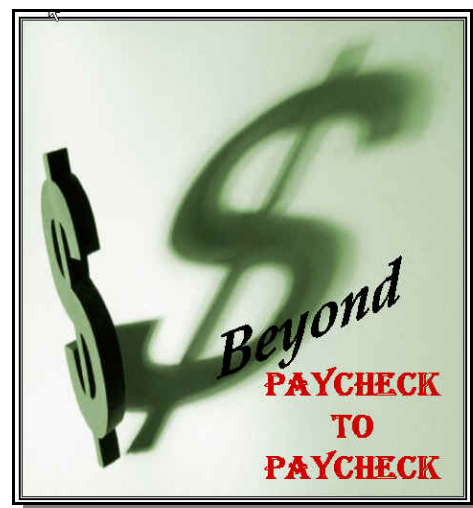
Class times are designed to fit your schedule. Class lengths can vary from a couple of hours to the two-year commitment for employees in the Advanced Leadership Academy (ALA). *See a separate story about ALA on page 5.*

While some offerings have been standard fare for many years, a number of new programs, offered for the first time last year, have been very



successful. A "Scale Down" class to help those wanting to lose weight began last fall. Several of the class

members had participated in Weight Watchers at Work group, but the cost was prohibitive for many. There have been about 35 central office employees involved in this program and they hope to lose a total of 200 pounds by the end of November. So far, the weight loss for the group is approaching a total of 100 pounds and the number grows weekly.



The most frequently requested class is "Beyond Paycheck to Paycheck." Offered once each quarter, class members learn budgeting, saving and getting out of debt. This year's class has gotten a bit of a facelift so even if you have taken this class before, you might want to take it again.

The two-day class usually has about 30-35 participants.

The “Get a Grip” Class won an award from AASHTO (American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials) last year. This class meets for two hours one day a week for eight weeks. Those completing the course reported significant improvement in planning, setting goals and their relationships.



NEW IN '05

Brand new offerings this year will be a “Dynamics Presentation” class on public speaking. Like most new classes, there was a “pilot” group who took this class last fall. A career development class, training for first



time managers and sessions on ethics training will also be launched this year.

Personnel will also be convening a 14-member training advisory panel to assist in generating ideas for training opportunities and possible collaborative opportunities. The panel will include KYTC employees as well as Federal Highway Administration staff and employees of the Univ. of Kentucky Transportation Center.

IDEAS FOR TRAINING

Sometimes initiatives by the folks in training come from “pleas” for help from a certain office and are tailor-made to that specific area. Fleet Management requested the help of trainers in designing a survey to send out to users to get feedback on their services. The survey results showed a need for improvements on the Help Desk; however, management in Fleet didn’t know exactly what needed to be done to achieve the desired results. Linda Pollock, a trainer in the office came to the rescue! She spent portions of three days with the three employees, helping them track the number of calls, categories of calls and making suggestions for improving their process. One additional phone line has already been added, allowing the employees to put callers “on hold” while using another line to get more information.

The Fleet staff also hopes to have a meeting in the near future with customers from other state agencies outside Transportation to get their suggestions. By the way, the

Help Desk takes about 300-400 calls per day from state employees out in one of the 5165 cars and light trucks and/or from vendors who make repairs on the vehicles. They are trying to make sure their customers are well satisfied.

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Some employees might be interested in much more training than a short-term course — you might be interested in working toward a college degree. There is help for you too through the educational assistance program available to all state employees.

Tuition assistance is available for schools throughout the state and employees can take up to three courses each semester (and one in a summer session), while graduate students can take two courses each semester. Assistance is also available for technical schools. Courses have to be pre-approved and they must be pertinent to the job the person holds. If these conditions are met, the class is paid for in advance. Questions about this possibility should be directed to Nancy Mullins at (502) 564-4610 (ext. 3056) or NancyF.mullins@ky.gov. Ms. Mullins calls educational assistance “a great opportunity” for employees.

Educational Achievement Awards, which can result in a 5% pay increase, can be given to employees earning their GED, 16.25 hours of college or technical school credit (undergraduate or graduate and for which the tuition has not already been paid) or for completing the Certified Public Managers Program. An employee can receive a total of three of these awards during

their tenure with the cabinet.

Every transportation cabinet employee must have six contact hours of training each year and these hours can be earned through any of the offerings of the training branch as well as attending other job-related seminars and conferences. It is the responsibility of the employee to talk with their direct supervisor about appropriate opportunities for them.

HOW TO GET STARTED

Registration forms for the classes are available on the Web at E-forms Library (TC10 folder) or from the training administration branch. Announcements are often sent out via a Postmaster e-mail. If you supervise an employee without computer access, make them aware of these opportunities.

The Office of Governmental Training also provides many training opportunities for state employees. Their class schedule for January through March can be viewed at <http://ogt.ky.gov>. The Commonwealth Communicate, the newsletter for all state government employees, also contains information about training opportunities.

With the diverse workforce KYTC has, the possibilities for training are endless — It can range from how to design footers for bridges to learning the basics of accounting. Each highway district has a training coordinator and suggestions can be made to that person for new classes and the coordinator should also have a listing of upcoming offerings.